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BOOK REVIEWS

Anthrax in humans and animals. Fourth Edition. World Health Organization; 2008. ISBN: 978 92 4 154753 6.

The fourth edition of the World Health Organization's (WHO) anthrax guidelines, *Anthrax in humans and animals*, has just been released on the WHO website (<http://www.who.int/csr/resources/publications/AnthraxGuidelines2008/en/index.html>) and can also be obtained in hardcover format.

The third edition of the guidelines was published in 1998. The principal author was Dr Peter C.B. Turnbull, and seven other experts from various countries contributed to the preparation of the guidelines at that time. Although the 1998 guidelines included highly scientific knowledge, the anthrax letter events that occurred in 2001 resulted in the emergence of new information on the disease and the undertaking of new studies worldwide. Many studies on anthrax following the anthrax letter events have been published in the international literature. The letter events aside, anthrax remains an endemic or hyper-endemic disease in some parts of world, and is still far from being eradicated.

The letter events and these new scientific developments encouraged the experts to revise the guidelines. The executive editor was once again Peter Turnbull, and Ottorino Cosivi from the WHO was the project leader. A multidisciplinary study was realized by 27 experts, including basic scientists, veterinary microbiologists, medical microbiologists, and clinicians from all over the world. Nine experts were the main contributors. A systematic review of the new scientific literature and relevant publications up to end of 2007 was undertaken, and all the guideline material was revised.

The following sections are now included: The disease and its importance, Etiology and ecology, Anthrax in animals, Anthrax in humans, Pathogenesis and pathology, Bacteriology, Treatment and prophylaxis, Control, Anthrax surveillance, Annexes, References, and Index. This amounts to 219 pages in total, and includes much documentation on human anthrax, animal anthrax, pathogenesis, laboratory studies, and incineration. This updated edition provides information on the disease and its importance, etiology, and ecology, and also offers guidance on the detection, diagnosis, epidemiology, disinfection and decontamination, treatment, and prophylaxis procedures, as well as environmental control and surveillance processes for anthrax in humans and animals.

In my opinion, this fourth edition of the guidelines includes useful new information on pathogenesis and on anthrax control and prevention. This publication will be very useful in developing countries where anthrax is endemic or hyper-endemic and also in developed countries.

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Clinical Infectious Disease. David Schlossberg (Ed.), Cambridge University Press: New York; 2008. 1549 pp. ISBN 978-0-521-87112-9.

This book is intended to provide a practical, clinically oriented overview of infectious diseases for general internists and infectious disease specialists. As the editor warns in the foreword, the depth of this book will not (and does not) equal that of "encyclopediaic tomes" such as Mandell and colleagues' *Principles and Practice of Infectious Diseases* (Churchill Livingstone, 2004).

The first section focuses on clinical syndromes, grouped by organ system. Other sections address hot topics such as bioterrorism, infection control, travel medicine and host susceptibility. No textbook in this field would be complete without a chapter discussing principles of antimicrobial use. The chapters are focused and divided into useful subheadings, which, together with the widespread use of color indexes and photographs, makes this book an enjoyable and poignant read.

In the practice of infectious diseases, it is notoriously difficult to create balance between an organ-system-based approach and pathogen-driven discussion of disease. What sets this book apart from many other references of this kind is the inclusion of organism-based chapters that complement the discussion of clinical entities, with excellent cross-referencing.

Many authors contributed their expertise to this book, leading to some variability in the quality of its content. Most chapters provide a succinct yet comprehensive overview. However, there are certain topics that warrant more detail (such as including interpretation of the tuberculin skin test and treatment of latent tuberculosis infection in the tuberculosis chapter). Less bias toward the management strategies employed in the United States would enable broader application of the principles discussed in this text.

In the end, *Clinical Infectious Disease* does provide a good and easy-to-use reference for the infectious disease enthusiast. For anyone beyond aficionados, it represents a

springboard for diving into the more encyclopedic and international seas of knowledge.

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